



COVID-19 Response Plan for New Jersey Developmental Centers

October 9, 2020

Introduction

The Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities' (Division) first priority is the health and safety of the individuals it serves and the critical staff that support them. The residents of the five developmental centers (Centers) the Division operates are no exception. The centers operated by the Division, and their contact information, are below:

Green Brook Regional Center 275 Green Brook Road Green Brook, NJ 08812 Phone: 732.968.6000 Fax: 732.968.8125 https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/home/centers/greenbrook/	Vineland Developmental Center PO Box 1513 1676 E. Landis Avenue Vineland, NJ 08362-1513 Phone: 856.696.6000 Fax: 856.696.6056 https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/home/centers/vineland/
Hunterdon Developmental Center PO Box 4003 40 Pittstown Road Clinton, NJ 08809-4003 Phone: 908.735.4031 Fax: 908.730.1311 https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/home/centers/hunterdon/	Woodbine Developmental Center DeHirsh Avenue Woodbine, NJ 08270 Phone: 609.861.2164 Fax: 609.861.5176 https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/home/centers/woodbine/
New Lisbon Developmental Center PO Box 130, Route 72 New Lisbon, NJ 08064 Phone: 609.726.1000 Fax: 609.726.1159 https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/home/centers/newlisbon/	

This document outlines protocols that the Division's centers utilize related to COVID-19. They are based on best practices recommended by various U.S. public health authorities including the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH). The content of this document is subject to change as more is learned about the virus.

Actions taken at all centers include, but are not limited to:

- The establishment of a COVID-19 Committee at each center to both manage all aspects of the COVID-19 response and to support the broader work of existing Infection Control Committees;
- Re-education of all residents and staff on hand hygiene, including hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions, with regular reinforcement;
- Re-education of all staff on cleaning and disinfection procedures, with regular reinforcement;
- Enhanced and more frequent cleaning of highly trafficked areas and surfaces;
- Re-enforcement of universal precautions and social distancing, to the extent practical based on person-centered needs;
- Adjustment of staffing patterns to ensure critical services are provided while reducing the number of individuals that pass through resident areas;
- Use of PPE throughout the centers.

The centers have adapted protocols as needed throughout the pandemic due to new information learned about COVID-19, operational experience and the addition of new resources. Some examples of this are the updating of COVID-19 symptoms in center screening policies as they are released by the CDC, setting up sufficient isolation space in the event of an outbreak and the provision of regular COVID-19 testing for residents and staff.

Each center resident is monitored multiple times each day for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Any changes in health are immediately reviewed by healthcare professionals and appropriate actions and care provided. In addition, each center complies with daily COVID-19 reporting requirements to their local health departments.

The centers are prepared in the event of a staffing shortage whether it would be related to weather, COVID-19 or any other reason. The centers have the ability to re-deploy staff from non-resident areas to resident areas, share staffing resources with each other if needed and bring on temporary staff as needed.

The Division provides a weekly COVID-19 dashboard for our community and center settings. This can be found in the *Developmental Disabilities* section when visiting the following link <https://nj.gov/humanservices/coronavirus.html>. A [Frequently Asked Questions document for Families, Guardians and Residents of Developmental Centers](#) is also available there.

Screening and Admittance

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 in the centers, each center has an active screening protocol in place for staff and visitors.

Center Staff

Center staff are instructed not to come to work if they feel ill. All staff reporting to work are screened for COVID-19 before each shift. This consists of questions about fever, signs and symptoms of COVID-19, travel, known contact with someone who recently tested positive for COVID-19 and a temperature check. Staff who do not pass the screening are sent home. Staff are also instructed to inform their supervisor if they become ill while at work so that appropriate actions can be taken to immediately relieve them of duty.

Visitors

Under certain parameters, there are two types of visitation permitted at the center (with permission of the resident's guardian) – outdoor and indoor. Weather permitting, outdoor visits can occur as long as the resident is not recently positive for or symptomatic of COVID-19 or otherwise ill. Indoor visits can only take place if the center has gone 28 days with no new COVID-19 infections of residents and staff.

No matter the visitation type, visitors are instructed to report to a specified location at the center when they arrive for their visit to undergo screening. This consists of questions about fever, signs and symptoms, travel, known contact with someone who recently tested positive for COVID-19 and a temperature check. Visitors must also sign a Visitor's Agreement. Visitors who do not pass the screening and/or do not sign the Visitor's Agreement are not permitted to visit.

Isolation, Cohorting, Universal Masking and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Each center has a protocol in place for the cohorting and isolation of residents. Residents are cohorted based on COVID-19 status. Specifically, residents who have tested positive at any point in time for COVID-19 reside only with others who have tested positive. Residents who have always tested negative for COVID-19 only reside with others who have always tested negative (also referred to as *true negative*).

All center staff are required to wear a face mask and other PPE while working. The type of face mask and PPE utilized is dependent on the setting within the center. All staff are trained on proper donning and doffing of PPE with regular re-enforcement. All areas of the center are frequently cleaned to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection.

Below is information related to how residents are cohorted and the PPE requirements for that area:

True Negative Resident Area

An area for residents who have always tested negative for COVID-19. Center staff are required to wear a surgical mask at all times in this area and other relevant PPE based on the care being provided.

Recovered Positive Resident Area

An area for residents who tested positive for COVID-19 at some point in the past but have been symptom free for at least 14 days **and** have had two consecutive negative tests. Center staff are required to wear a surgical mask at all times in this area and other relevant PPE based on the care being provided.

Active Positive Resident Area

An area for residents who tested positive for COVID-19 recently and have not yet had two consecutive COVID-19 tests. At such time as a resident who tested positive for COVID-19 has had no symptoms for 14 days and two consecutive negative tests they will be moved to a Recovered Positive Resident Area. Center staff are required to wear an N95 mask at all times and other relevant PPE based on the care being provided.

Resident Isolation Area (Essential Off-Campus Interaction)

An area for residents who must travel off grounds for an essential medical appointment or emergency room visit. Out of an abundance of caution for other center residents, individuals returning from these essential off grounds interactions remain in this area until they are asymptomatic for at least 14 days **and** have been tested for COVID-19. If they test negative, the resident is returned to their regular living area. If they test positive, the resident would move to an Active Positive Resident Area. Center staff are required to wear a N95 mask at all times in this area and other relevant PPE based on the care being provided.

Resident Isolation Area (Residents Presenting with Possible Symptoms)

An area used if a resident displays symptoms of COVID-19 but have not yet had a confirmatory test. If they test negative, the resident is returned to their regular living area. If they test positive, the resident would move to an Active Positive Resident Area. Center staff are required to wear a N95 mask at all times in this area and other relevant PPE based on the care being provided.

Non-Resident Area

These are areas where residents are not present at any time, such as administrative office space and maintenance areas. Surgical masks are required at all times.

COVID-19 Testing

All center residents and staff are routinely tested for COVID-19.

Residents

Each center resident who has always tested negative for COVID-19 is re-tested regularly. This occurs about every seven days. Residents who test positive for COVID-19 are moved to an Active Positive Resident Area until such time as they have displayed no symptoms for 14 days and have had two consecutive negative tests. After that criteria is met they are moved to a Recovered Positive Resident Area. If a resident presents with symptoms of COVID-19 between tests they are moved to a Resident Isolation Area for observation and proper medical treatment.

Center Staff

Center staff who have always tested negative for COVID-19 are re-tested regularly. This occurs about every seven days. Staff who test positive for COVID-19 are put off work immediately. Consistent with CDC guidelines, they are not permitted to resume work until they have gone 14 days without symptoms and can provide a note from their doctor clearing them for return to work.

Communication with Families/Guardians and Notification of COVID-19 Positivity

Each center is committed to communicating with families/guardians related to the well-being of its residents. Centers will reach out to families/guardians about every seven days to provide a general update on how the resident is doing, regardless of COVID-19 positivity. During this contact, the family/guardian will be notified of the number of actively positive residents and staff at the facility.

In any instance where a resident tests positive for COVID-19, or comes in close contact with a resident or staff who tests positive, the center will reach out within 24 hours of the positive test result to inform the family/guardian.

In addition to outdoor visits and indoor visits, when the center is able to provide them, each center will provide the opportunity for interaction with the resident via telephone or other virtual methods. Examples of virtual methods of visitation include Skype, Zoom or other video platforms.

For questions, complaints or to schedule a telephone call or other virtual interaction with a resident please contact the Social Services Department of the center in which the resident lives. Contact information for each center can be found in the [Introduction](#) section of this document.